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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002954

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/14/2015

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SUBJECT: ACTION REQUEST--CONTINUED DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY SUPPORT FOR BORDER SUPPORT TEAM MISSION IN IRAQ

REF: A. US CUSTOMS 131939Z APR 05

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 1562

[1](#)C. BAGHDAD 1646

Classified By: Charge d' Affaires David M. Satterfield for reasons 1.4 (a), (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C/REL TO UK AND AUS) This is an action request. See paragraph 2.

[1](#)2. (C/ REL TO UK AND AUS) Action Request: Post asks that the Department of State request the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (Customs and Border Protection) to continue its support of the Border Support Team mission in Iraq. Teams at Trebil, Waleed, Rabia and Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) are due to depart at the end of their ninety-day tours at varying dates in September. Post asks that the Department request replacement teams and that they be deployed in time to allow for an overlap of at least one week at the border sites. The same standard should be applied to subsequent replacements. Post welcomes the DHS's offer to provide a Country Director in late July. End action request.

[1](#)3. (C/ REL TO UK AND AUS) Border Support Teams (BSTs) deployed to Iraq by the DHS Customs and Border Protection agency are an essential ingredient in the execution of Iraq's strategy to reduce illegal traffic and to facilitate the flow of legal cross-border traffic. BSTs are performing superbly at the three border ports of entry (POE) and at the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP). One major result of their work is expedited trucking from Syria and Jordan, essential to the food distribution system in Iraq. Although not quantifiable, the BSTs have also likely disrupted smuggling and the flow of foreign fighters. While noticeable progress is already evident, numerous challenges remain, making their presence in Iraq a continuing requirement.

[1](#)4. (C/ REL TO UK AND AUS) The Iraqi initiative to provide a unified POE command under a single officer with multi-ministerial authority is a new initiative, which followed considerable coalition encouragement. The new POE Directors General are going to need mentoring and a period of staff development. The BSTs represent the best means of delivering this expertise and support, making them fundamental to the success of the initiative.

[1](#)5. (C/- REL TO UK AND AUS) Other challenges at the POEs will also require BST involvement for the foreseeable future. BSTs have identified shortcomings in physical security and traffic flow that take time to eliminate, both for construction and for development of proper implementing procedures. They have also identified challenges in organization and training of POE personnel. While some of the solutions are fairly simple procedural matters, the BSTs have seen that the POE personnel revert to their previous inefficient and ineffective procedures when appropriate leadership is not available. That leadership is often provided by the BST; developing the Iraqi leadership to perform the same function will take much time. Some technological solutions (e.g., PISCES, Z-Back Scatter) being introduced will also require significant time to ensure effective operations and maintenance. Rapid personnel turnover in the POEs -- probably a fact of life because of their remote locations and austere operating environs -- also means that solutions to problems depend on the long-term commitment of the BSTs. Success at the POEs is further dependent on the development of complementary support capabilities being developed at the appropriate ministries, another long-term issue.

[1](#)6. (C/ REL TO UK AND AUS) DHS has proposed a fairly robust Baghdad-based team that moves out to the POEs as required. If funding can be found, DHS's proposal may be an acceptable alternative in the mid-term future; but not until conditions for success have been established at least at the current locations. Other POEs (e.g., ArAr, Um Qasr, Habur Gate) face challenges and may need BSTs of their own in the mid-term. Options for deploying teams to those POEs need to be retained.

[1](#)7. (C/ REL TO UK AND AUS) Based on their employment experience, BST members have recommended changes to team composition and employment. The addition of the promised DHS Country Director to the Mission Country Team will enhance the ability of the Mission to evaluate the performance of the

BSTs and to make decisions about team composition and employment principles, as well as the need for subsequent replacements.

18. (C/ REL TO UK AND AUS) By having a positive effect on the legal traffic flow at the POEs, DHS Border Support Teams complement nicely the efforts of the Multi-National Force-Iraq to stop the illegal flow along other parts of the border. DHS continued support of this important mission would be greatly appreciated.

19. (U) REO BASRAH, REO HILLAH, REO MOSUL and REO KIRKUK minimize considered.  
Satterfield